

25 March 1966

MEMORANDUM No. 2

SUBJECT: Concerning professional (unclassified)
publication by CIA employees and their
identity as authors.

1. The following discussion assumes:

- a) that there is and will continue to be a sizeable class of professional employees who are overt (i.e. have no "cover" except CIA) and for whom no covert assignment is planned or desired, and
- b) that this class includes the majority of those in the Agency who are engaged in applying disciplines which are common to government intelligence and to the academic world.

2. In principle there is a distinction between the employee as a specialist in his own right and the employee as an officer who applies his specialty in the service of the Agency and the government. The distinction is not that between what the employee knows as a specialist and what he knows as an officer of CIA, but rather between his knowledge considered as a potential and the use he makes of his knowledge considered as an actual application.

3. A consultant, for example, is a specialist in his own right. He accepts restrictions on that use of his knowledge which he makes in response to Agency request. To increase his knowledge for the Agency's purpose the consultant is given classified information and he is expected to observe security regulations governing the use of it for any other purpose. Obviously he can and does use the information so obtained as background and guidance for

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other purposes. He cannot help it. There is no acceptable way of erasing from a healthy mind what it has learned, except by the mind's own forgetfulness. If the classified information gained by the consultant is important - and unique - his mind will be all the more tenacious in retaining it for future use, if only in consultation with himself. And if he cannot remember where and how he learned it, he cannot be called trustworthy, even though of good character and intention. There are normal mental procedures for incorporating classified information: generalization, adjustment and revision, coupled at times with false but plausible attribution. In other words the consultant has the mind's own natural devices which are similar to the practices of the Clandestine Service - or to that practice so distastefully and mistakenly called "sanitization".

4. The difference between a specialist in CIA's employ and a consultant is one of degree of use but not of kind qua specialist. Consultants can have an advantage over their fellow specialists in CIA. The latter have full-time jobs applying their knowledge to government needs, whereas a "consultant" can in fact work full-time under contract for the government and at the same time publish practically all of his work. Frequently these consultants are free lance entrepreneurs in the vast new business of research-catering for which the government provides essential ingredients, recipes and high pay. In addition, it is taken for granted that consultants have the right to publish their manuscripts once certified against the revelation of classified information. Policy is not at issue as a rule because the sponsor disavows responsibility for or commitment to the findings and conclusions of the published work. Some forms of this activity would give pause, as, for example, a full-time consulting specialist in international relations who ran a daily newspaper column on current events.

5. The distinction between the Agency employee as a specialist in his own right and as an official of CIA means that there are applications of his knowledge in which he can speak or write as representing himself and not the Agency. That he not only can, but may, has been demonstrated by our practice in the past. In all cases, however, he has met two basic conditions of security and policy, one involving the security of classified information and the other the protection of the Agency.

a) Security of information tends to restrict public expression to description and analysis which can be documented from unclassified or declassified information. (Important materials have been declassified for scholars, e.g., the Tibetan and Fukien documents).


b) Policy (protection of the Agency) normally restricts the subject and its treatment to matters which are not controversial issues of U.S. policy. As in their private-public lives employees must not bring discredit to the Agency by unfavorable notice to themselves. Discredit could come from work of poor quality and judgment or from the accusation against the Agency of waging political warfare over issues of U.S. policy. In either case, at present, the Agency is protected only if the identity of the employee with CIA can be successfully concealed.

6. Of the two conditions, security of information and security of the Agency's reputation, it is the second which is the more difficult to judge in practice. The work should meet a standard of quality at least as high as that in the open world of scholars and writers and it should constitute a contribution to its subject without making the author an advocate or apologist in public debate. But these criteria

are too general to be helpful. The academic sponsor or publisher takes care of the question of quality by his own determination of whether the manuscript submitted meets his standards for publication. The question for the Agency remains that of avoiding open pit falls of controversy over U.S. policy. The experienced analyst who writes for publication knows how to protect himself - and the Agency - from injury.

7. The Agency's attitude toward professional publications by its employees does not differ in one essential respect from that of any institution whose employees perform for learned and public audiences. It is one of pride in quality - integrity, objectivity, and intelligence in the common or broader sense - whether the authors are authorized to identify themselves as CIA employees or not. It can be assumed, however, that the authors are already known as CIA employees to at least a few and can be identified for a larger public by any newspaper reporter who takes the trouble to try to find out.

8. In conclusion, the Agency's first concern is of course with the quality of its analysts, whether they publish, or not. If they do publish, however, and command the respect of learned and sophisticated members of the professional audience (respect is necessary not agreement), then the Agency's concern about the identification of the author as an employee of CIA becomes secondary. The risk to its own reputation is an acceptable one, because it stands to gain, not lose, when a reputable scholar is known to be in its employ. The risk to reputation, such as it may be, is run by the employee as a specialist in his own right and by his publisher or academic sponsor, who for reasons of their own policies may not want public identification with CIA. A consultant may have the same problem of judgment.


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